

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 05288 132037Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9295

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 5288

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NEA/RA - HOLLY FROM WINN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JO

SUBJECT: AAFLI-JFTU RELATIONS

REFC STATE 248456

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH LRO OCTOBER 12, SHAHER MAJALLI EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT WHAT HE TERMED "MISUNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN HIMSELF AND PALADINO RE VISIT OF AAFLI REPS TO AMMAN. MAJALLI SAID THAT HE HAD INDEED BEEN AWAITING SUCH A VISIT THIS FALL FOLLOWING AMIABLE TALKS IN BENEVA, BUT HE DID NOT REALIZE FURTHER LETTER FROM HIMSELF TO PALADINO OR GRAY WAS NECESSARY. HE ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE, SUCH A LETTER HAD "RECENTLY" BEEN SENT TO AAFLI IN FORM OF REQUEST FOR PART OF CLINIC X-RAY APPARATUS; IN THIS LETTER, SAID MAJALLI, HE HAD REAFFIRMED INVITATION TO PALADINO, GRAY ET AL. UPSHOT OF WHOLE MATTER IS THAT MAJALLI WOULD BE DELIGHTED SHOULD THESE GENTLEMEN BE ABLE TO VISIT AMMAN. (MAJALLI HIMSELF PLANS TO SPEND TWO WEEKS OF OCTOBER IN CAIRO ON UNION BUSINESS. ANY TIME IN NOVEMBER, OR LATER, WOULD BE CONVENIENT). MAJALLI IS NOW ASSUMING THAT EMBASSY WILL REAFFIRM INVITATION. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS AGAINST GOING BACK TO MAJALLI TO SOLICIT MORE FORMAL INVITATION.

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2. MAJALLI DISCUSSED GENEVA AND SUBSEQUENT DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MINISTER OF LABOR ISAM AL-'AJLOUNI. MAJALLI CLAIMED THAT AT GENEVA, 'AJLOUNI INFORMED PALADINO THAT HE ('AJLOUNI) PLANNED TO "ENCOURAGE THE LEFTISTS" IN JORDANIAN LABOR MOVEMENT " WHO HAD FOR TOO LONG BEEN UNDER THE THUMB OF THE GOVERNMENT." JAJALLI, A STRONG CONSERVATIVE, CLAIMS THAT HE FOUND SUCH TALK UPSETTING, AND STALKED OUT OF MEETING. (MAJALLI, WHO SPEAKS NO ENGLISH, ALSO CLAIMS THAT HE WAS DELIBERATELY CUT OUT OF TRANSLATIONS BY 'AJLOUNI AND AIDE SAMIR QSOUS.) MAJALLI ASKED LRO TO AFFIRM TO AAFLI THAT WHATEVER PIQUE HE DISPLAYED AT GENEVA WAS AIMED AT 'AJLOUNI AND AIDES, NOT AT AAFLI REPS.

3. MAJALLI ADDED THAT FOLLOWING GENEVA, 'AJLOUNI'S "ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEFTISTS, AND EVEN COMMUNISTS, "HAS PROVEN SO DIVISIVE TO LOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT THAT MAJALLI COMPLAINED IN PERSON TO PRIME MINISTER BADRAN. ASKED FOR SPECIFICS, MAJALLI CITED PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF 'AJLOUNI IN RECENT WORKERS' STRIKES AT ZARQA OIL REFINERY, DURING WHICH 'AJLOUNI'S ALLEGED SYMPATHY WITH LEFTISTS UNDERCUT MAJALLI'S OWN ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH MODERATES.

4. RE STUDY PROGRAMS (PARA 3 REFTTEL), ALMOST TWO MONTHS AGO LRO SENT PERSONAL LETTERS TO MAJALLI, WITH COPIES TO 'AJLOUNI, GIVING DETAILS OF TWO AID-FUNDED FALL LABOR PROGRAMS (INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND TRADE UNIONS AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS). NEITHER MAJALLI NOR 'AJLOUNI RESPONDED. QUESTIONED OCTOBER 12, MAJALLI REPLIED THAT JFTU HAD NOT BOTHERED TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES BECAUSE HEAD OF NATIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE THROUGH WHICH SUCH CANDIDATES MUST BE SCREENED, WAS OUT OF COUNTRY, RETURNING ON OCTOBER 13.

5. COMMENT: AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, JFTU HAS
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BEEN IN STATE OF NEAR-PARALYSIS SINCE MAY ELECTIONS. DEGREE TO WHICH DIFFICULTIES ARE DUE TO INTRANSIGENCE OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES IS UNCERTAIN, ALTHOUGH MAJALLI APPEARS SOMEWHAT PARANOID AND INFLEXIBLE WHEN DESCRIBING 'AJLOUNI AND FORMER JFTU SYG 'AHID QINTAR AS "COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS." WHILE AAFLI REPS MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO INSERT THEMSELVES INTO STRAINED

LOCAL SITUATION, EMBASSY FEELS THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE SHOT IN ARM FOR ALL CONCERNED AND COULD POSSIBLY HAVE GALVANIZING EFFECT ON PARTICIPANTS.

6. FINAL POSITIVE NOTE: LRO TALKED WITH MAJALLI AT AAFLI-FUND WORKERS' CLINIC, WHICH WAS BEEHIVE OF EFFICIENT ACTIVITY, UNUSUAL IN JORDAN AT 4 P.M. DUE TO CURRENT CHOLERA WARNINGS, HUNDREDS OF WORKERS WERE RECEIVING APPROPRIATE INNOCULATIONS UNDER CONDITIONS SUPERIOR TO THOSE OBSERVED AT OTHER GOVERNMENT-FUNDED HEALTH FACILITIES IN JORDAN.

4. ACTION REQUIRED: PLEASE CONFIRM ETA OF AAFLI REP IN AMMAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PICKERING

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